

LETTERS

Going in Circles

Dear Sir:

I am writing to applaud Brigadier General Philip L. Bolté for his article, "Full Circle: The Armored Cavalry Platoon," which appeared in the September-October 1994 issue. As one who was fortunate enough to have served in these magnificent organizations, I often reminisce about the "good old days" while counting my lucky stars that I was spared the frustrations that apparently face cavalry troopers of today. As General

Bolté points out, the cavalry platoon that was adopted following WWII was a mechanized combined arms team that reflected lessons learned the hard way in combat. Mechanized cavalry units of that era had to be constantly reinforced, augmented, supplemented, or in some fashion strengthened to enable them to either perform their mission or avoid suffering unacceptable losses when faced with superior opposition. Cavalry groups and squadrons were almost always supported by tank destroyer, artillery, engineer, or infantry units to make up organization/equipment shortfalls in hitting power, close-in security, urban combat, and the ability to hold ground.

The CONARC study referenced by General Bolté used as a starting point a report issued by the General Board which convened at Bad Nauheim in November 1945. The board addressed the performance of mechanized cavalry during the war. After identifying shortcomings, they made recommendations for organizational and equipment changes that would provide cavalry leaders the ability to perform all normal cavalry tasks without undue reliance on supporting troops. The organization created by CONARC was the end result of these findings. The new organization not only corrected most of the inadequacies experienced during WWII, it produced a cadre of

officers and noncommissioned officers fully at home in a combined arms environment. In retrospect, one could almost say this particular organization provided one of the most effective training vehicles ever devised for future armor/cavalry senior leaders.

The call for mortars, tanks, and dismounts being voiced by today's cavalry troopers is identical to that heard nearly 50 years ago. Do we really need to *keep* going in circles?

CHARLES P. FRINKS
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Blue-Skying: Better C² Systems

Dear Sir:

While TDY in the Stars Wars building for a 1989 NTC rotation, my thought at seeing their computer tracking system was that this is how we should all see battle. So it was with great interest I read Major Timothy Cherry's article (Nov-Dec 94 issue) on future C² systems. I agree with the need for most of the capabilities detailed in his article, but wish to offer four modifications/additions that may not have been contemplated.

For the Core Instrumentation System (CIS), I am adamantly opposed to a system that can display 'all friendly graphics in the file.' We plan missions two echelons below and must know commander's intent two levels up. That should be the limit of icon observation, with the exceptions of a task force's scout and mortar vehicles and friendly forces within our battlespace across an assigned boundary. Any more risks information overload and possible attempts to issue orders outside of the chain of command. It also signals a fundamental shift to centralized control from directive control (or mission tactics).

The CIS's E-mail system should include an interrogation capability that allows staffers to access personnel, CLASS III and V, and vehicle status as displayed in the next lower echelon's C² vehicle(s). At the company (team)/troop level, the XO should be able to interrogate each vehicle's sensor suite which would include transmitters in soldier's CVC or Kevlar helmets keyed to heart and breathing rates, in fuel tanks or slaved to the fuel gauge and in each round's tube in the ammunition racks (the latter to indicate how many rounds remain on board). The "Black Box" feature would report vehicle status. (The FSE/FSCO-ORD's computer should be able to interrogate DS artillery CLASS V and tube status, and the S2/J2/G2's computer should have an enemy order of battle "counter," based on projected enemy strength minus BDA data.) With this capability, each echelon receives updates on personnel, CLASS III

and V, and vehicles, on demand and at rates exceeding SOP reporting requirements (as invariably is requested once battle is joined) without interrupting fighters. Near real-time data produces pushed logistics and more accurate staff estimates.

Two major additions should reach C² systems used for the orders process and the military decision-making process (MDMP). First, a software capability allowing wargaming of doctrinal enemy and friendly courses of action (COAs) should be available to assist COA development, wargaming, and synchronization. Software should allow us to depart from doctrine if intelligence or operations staffers believe the variation is necessary to accurately portray a desired COA or the fighting style of different commanders. This allows for wargaming as it is intended to occur.

Second, and closely tied to COA software, should be the ability to portray terrain in three dimensions, either with a hologram or through special computer graphics. In the MDMP, this gives a staffer the ability to "wargame in three dimensions," as alluded to by Major Michael Cloy. In an OPORD presentation, this is necessary for three reasons having to do with the way we learn and retain information. (In taking education courses to pursue teaching certification, I learned the average person receives about 75 percent of their information through the sense of sight, at first attempt retains about 50 percent of what is seen and heard simultaneously, and more easily translates an actual object, like a hilltop, into symbolology, like the hilltop's contour lines, than the reverse. This means that our orders process should be primarily a visual presentation, along with, instead of mainly through, the auditory medium. It also suggests that it should show the relationship of enemy and friendly forces and the terrain in a format that precludes as much translation between symbolology and reality (i.e. the contour lines of our 2-D map into draws, spurs, intervisibility lines, etc.) as we can provide. With 3-D terrain, the critical relationship of OCOKA is shown as it is applied, instead of conjured up in different fashions in the minds of soldiers with varied experience levels.) Lastly, when in the fight, a task force can wargame a FRAGO (a reason COA software must be able to run at greater than real time) or find different movement routes on the computer and send E-mail instructions and waypoints to the task force.

These four suggestions, along with characteristics presented in Major Cherry's article, provide us with a comprehensive C² system for the future. Rapidity and a multiplicity of options are applied to our MDMP, clarity is inherent to our orders process, and battle tracking and flexibility in the fight are simplified and expedited. Together, these improvements act to increase our C² tempo and, by association, our operating

tempo, a necessity in "getting (a shrinking Army) there first with the most."

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LAARNG

Are We Teaching "Coursemanship?"

Dear Sir:

As MG Paul E. Funk said in the July-August 1993 issue of *ARMOR*, "Active and Reserve must be full partners on the battlefields of the future. There can be no step-child mentality if we expect to fight and win." I submit to you that, in order to be full partners on the battlefields of tomorrow, we must be full partners on the training fields of today. The Armor Force needs to train together to the same standard.

Tank Table VIII is the gunnery table that tests a tank crew's ability to fight a tank in combat and win. When a tank crew qualifies on Tank Table VIII, it means that the crew has mastered all the skills taught in the preliminary tank tables I through VII. If a crew never trains on Tank Tables I through VII and just rehearses Tank Table VIII until it qualifies, do we have a crew that has mastered all the skills taught in Tank Tables I through VII? Is this a combat-ready crew? I don't think so. I think we have a crew that is well rehearsed on the test (Tank Table VIII) without learning the lessons and skills needed to be combat-ready.

The Tank Crew Gunnery Skills Test (TCGST) tests a crew member's basic gunnery skills that the tank commander taught his crew using the tank's -10 manual and FM 17-12. Tank Tables I through VII train the crew to fight the tank as a crew and win on the battlefield. Each tank table trains specific tasks. If you skip any part of the TCGST test or a tank table, you are taking a chance that a task is not taught.

ST 17-12 RC introduces a new tank gunnery training strategy designed to recognize the limited time Reserve Component (RC) tank crews have to train gunnery skills. This model changes the focus of FM 17-12 from a manual that trains crews on how to survive and win in combat to a "how-to" book on beating Tank Table VIII. In ST 17-12 RC, the TCGST is broken down into essential and nonessential tasks and the tasks, conditions, and standards for Tank Tables I through VII are changed or eliminated. According to FM 17-12, all TCGST tasks must be performed to standard prior to firing main gun ammunition, and Tank Table IV (TCPC) is a gate table

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that must be fired to the tasks, conditions, and standards for that table, not a mirror of Tank Table VIII.

FM 17-12's training strategy is designed to make combat ready crews and platoons. ST 17-12 RC training strategy is designed to rehearse, teach "coursemanship," and qualify on Tank Table VIII. Instead of changing the standards, maybe we should stop fooling ourselves and eliminate the pre-mobilization Tank Table VIII requirement for the Reserves. This would also allow commanders to focus on training, not qualifying. Then, during post-mobilization training, shoot Tank Tables VIII through XII, where the TIME, training facilities, and equipment are available.

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The Combat Arms Leader

Dear Sir:

Three recent articles in *ARMOR* — LTC(P) Dempsey's "The Green Tabbers of Force XXI" and MAJ Morrison's "Armor Officer 2000" from the September-October issue, plus CPT Salerno's "Is Well-Rounded Actually Better?" from the May-June issue — offer informed insights into the shortfalls that exist in our current professional development and assignments system and the challenges posed to that system in a future of reduced force structure and increasing demands on those remaining. Assuming that the Army's post-Cold War restructuring will ultimately change how we train and manage our officers, I believe we need to keep in mind the fundamental characteristics that define great leaders and strive to foster those in whatever revised system takes shape.

FM 100-5 gives some very clear guidance on what the Army expects from the officers chosen to lead today's force-projection soldiers. The manual states that competent, confident leadership is the most essential dynamic of combat power... Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. They provide purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. Leaders determine how maneuver, firepower, and protection are used, ensuring these elements are effectively employed against the enemy.¹ Given that mandate, our doctrine also describes some of the qualities we must develop to succeed. Initiative, agility, flexibility, and versatility are all offered as essential qualities in leading our forces on future battlefields. The officer who develops and applies these primarily mental qualities will be the winner in highly fluid maneuver warfare. The manual further states that "...command is more an art than a science. In battle, it is often guided by intuition and feel gained from years of practice and study."² Our professional responsi-

bility is to make sure that our training program and selection process results in the best practitioners of this art at all levels.

To achieve this end state, I am on the other side of the specialization debate from CPT Salerno. My personal view is that although our tools of combat may change due to technological, doctrinal, and/or organizational development, the principles controlling their application are unwavering. I agree completely with CPT Salerno that "experience carried from one assignment to the next will be a key element in maintaining readiness."³ However, I draw a different conclusion. Rather than gaining that experience only in tank battalions, cavalry squadrons, light or mechanized infantry battalions, or any other subset of the combat arms world, the combat arms officer needs the widest possible exposure to all the tools and tactics of maneuver warfare so that he can become an expert, not in the tools' technical operation, but in their tactical application. I don't agree with the vast disparity that CPT Salerno points out between, for example, armor and cavalry tactics. The principles are the same and the missions are all simple variations or components of the only two things combat arms forces do: attack or defend. "...One of my cardinal rules of battle leadership — or leadership in any field — is to be yourself, to strive to apply the basic principles of the art of war, and seek to accomplish your assigned missions by your own methods and in your own way."⁴ This guidance does not change with the TOE.

The idea that we can delay combined arms pollination until our leaders achieve high rank is losing its relevance. As a young lieutenant, I saw my company commander faced with maneuvering a force consisting not only of tank platoons, but of mechanized infantry, engineer, chemical smoke, and air defense platoons as well. He was also responsible for putting fire support on target through his FSO. Of course, my experience is the norm. Was it possible for my commander to be an "expert" on all of the systems suddenly arrayed in his team? Certainly not. Would his specialization in armor vs. cavalry or mechanized vs. light infantry help him apply this wide range of capabilities any better? As force structure goes away and equipment capabilities increase (through digitization, firepower, etc.), I believe the integration of combined arms systems will devolve to progressively lower echelons. Any specialization of the combat arms officer, however junior, that degrades his ability to orchestrate maneuver warfare is to the overall detriment of the force.

If, as I do, you determine that a combat arms officer's primary role is to apply the Army's tools using maneuver warfare tactics, a valid question arises regarding "technical proficiency." I maintain that the combat arms leader's role in our Army is not to be the technical master of the wide array of equipment he is charged to employ. The Army provides its leaders with all the ex-

pert technical advice needed in the form of first sergeants, platoon sergeants, master gunners, armorers, supply sergeants, maintenance technicians, maintenance team chiefs, operations sergeants, administrative specialists, etc. The officer who finds himself forced to become the technical expert on any system is either not enforcing proficiency and training standards or is not properly delegating authority and responsibility to the soldiers he leads. The combat arms leader cannot allow himself to be "...forced into a cult of detail and made to master the intricacies of logistics and administration. Professionalism becomes equivalent with the ability to memorize tables of organization and equipment, and if one officer displays his knowledge of details, the next will show his expertise by asking for more. But I submit that technical expertise in the combat arms officer is irrelevant, profligate, and even harmful if it is not linked directly to his ability to outthink the enemy."⁵ As I explained to a new platoon leader confused about his role in the maintenance process, the leader's role is not to fix equipment, but rather to cause equipment to be fixed. The same principle applies to the other "technical" aspects of the combat arms profession.

For the combat arms officer to achieve "tactical proficiency" generally requires nothing more than education, effort, experience, and the ability and inclination to think creatively. Again, the tools he controls will continually change, and the amount of exposure our leaders have to the capabilities and limitations of those tools will directly impact his ability to employ them effectively. I agree with Leonhard that war is a thinking man's game.⁶ "Genius is attainable by the average leader who disciplines himself to learn subtlety and craft. The emphasis, then, is on the historically demonstrable fact that a clever leader can routinely whip a force larger than his own." Therefore, combat arms leaders "...must groom their ranks in order to produce bold, well-read, dashing battlefield leaders, adept at outthinking their foes."⁷ Educating combat arms leaders to think creatively is the key-stone to winning the thinking war in two clear ways. "First, by developing creativity in future leaders, we shed the constraints (a focus on process and method) that have fostered management at the expense of leadership. Creativity implies a broader view of the world, freedom to be intuitive, and the willingness to take risks... The second outcome is better reactions to the ever-increasing rate of technological change — creativity fosters an entrepreneurial spirit, a vision of the future that ensures flexibility in problem-solving. Our military leaders must be capable of such vision if we are to remain an effective fighting force."⁸ Fostering these qualities through training and education is the challenge for senior leaders, CTCs, and the schoolhouse, which today, in my view, focus too much on process and method at the expense of exploring and applying creative tactical thought.

Given the bewildering variety and scope of the combat arms leadership skills I've touched on, I agree with MAJ Morrison that in the future our professional development models should focus on developing a leader's warfighting skills and that only those demonstrating proficiency be selected to orchestrate our future combined arms fights.⁹ I also believe that the cut will have to be made earlier in an officer's career than it is now. A broad range of assignments is key to developing the kind of leader I've discussed, but that range must confine itself to developing warfighting skills and teaching those skills to others. Authorizations in the Officer Distribution Plan discussed by both LTC(P) Dempsey and MAJ Morrison appear, in my view, to be the inhibitor to this end, not the number of officers the drawdown has left behind to fill them. Hopefully, as authorizations are eliminated, the criteria will be how well that particular authorization contributes to developing the combat arms leader I've described.

LTC(P) Dempsey hinted at one possible outcome of our current restructuring that would drastically impact the way we do business and, in my view, help the combat arms leader succeed. "We are not simply downsizing in the manner of past postwar periods. We are truly restructuring... It may even challenge our understanding of branch."¹⁰ I have deliberately avoided describing my hypothetical leader as an armor, infantry, artillery, or any other branch of officer because the combat arms leader of the future may not get any more specialized than just that — combat arms. Whereas now we do not make that distinction until the general officer level, future tools (digitization, for example) and what I hope will be the creation of truly combined arms organizations at lower echelons (as reduced force structure dictates) will demand a great deal more agility, flexibility, initiative, and versatility from our leaders than what our current branch-specific combat arms officers are trained to possess. Therefore, our critical challenge is to devise a system that lowers the generalization threshold, as opposed to building more specialization barriers. As professionals, we have to be sufficiently open-minded to put aside our biases and consider the possibilities. "The good military leader will dominate the events which surround him; once he lets events get the better of him, he will lose the confidence of his men, and when that happens, he ceases to be of value as a leader."¹¹ In our current restructuring, unlike those of recent history, we must leap past our institutional inertia to create the leaders our soldiers need to dominate tomorrow's battlefields.

Notes

¹FM 100-5, *Operations*, HQDA, June 1993, p. 2-11.

²FM 100-5, p. 2-15.

³Captain George Salerno, "Is Well-Rounded Actually Better?," *ARMOR*, May-June 1994, p. 47.

⁴General Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War*. Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1967.

⁵Robert R. Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver Warfare Theory and Airland Battle*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1991, p. 250.

⁶Leonhard, p. 248.

⁷Leonhard, p. 249.

⁸Robert L. Taylor and William E. Rosenbach (editors), *Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984, p. 211-212.

⁹Major Douglas J. Morrison, "Armor Officer 2000," *ARMOR*, September-October 1994, p. 47.

¹⁰Lieutenant Colonel (P) Martin E. Dempsey, "The Green Tabbers of Force XXI," *ARMOR*, September-October 1994, p. 49.

¹¹Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery*. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1958.

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AD Missing from Light Cav Plan

Dear Sir:

In his article, "Light Armored Cavalry — The Right Force at the Right Time" (Jan-Feb 95), CPT David Nobles outlines his concept of the ideal light armored cavalry regiment, both in terms of equipment and organization. It is his proposed organization of the regiment that prompts this letter.

CPT Nobles' organization chart seems reasonable enough, until one notices that several Battlefield Operating Systems are missing, namely fire support, air defense, and chemical (a portion of mobility/counter-mobility/survivability). Any concept without the King of Battle could be critiqued on that alone, but I would like to focus on CPT Nobles' omission of air defense.

I will begin by highlighting some of the key points that CPT Nobles makes in his article. He refers to his light cavalry as being a highly flexible, deployable organization, able to fulfill missions in a mid- or high-intensity scenario. He states that our future enemy is more likely to be poorly to moderately equipped, but plays down the importance of low-intensity operations, implying correctly that a unit should not be tailored for low-intensity scenarios only. CPT Nobles also frequently refers to corps assets that would be available to this light cavalry organization, allowing it to make a contribution on all battlefields in any contingency.

My disagreements with this article center on three main issues. First, a light, deployable force is more than likely going to be one of the first units into an area, before corps or any of their assets arrive. This unit

would be deployed into theater with no air defense or field artillery.

Let us suppose, however, that they were provided corps assets. Non-habitual relationships have frequently resulted in disaster in our training centers (not to mention during real conflicts), which brings me to my second point. Habitual relationships, especially in the cavalry, are a must. A unit that is required to do so many unique missions needs to have slice elements that work with them on a regular basis. This is of special concern to air defense units, who frequently must "adjust" their doctrine in order to provide proper air defense for the cavalry (as has been the case with the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment).

The platform of this habitual relationship must be an air defense battery (as opposed to a separate section or platoon). This not only provides the perfect vehicle for the desired relationship in the regiment, but also allows the unit to sustain itself by providing the necessary support to maintain its highly sophisticated air defense weapon systems.

My final point concerns CPT Nobles' comment about our poorly to moderately equipped future enemy. Even a poorly equipped enemy can be highly lethal, as operations in Somalia and Chechnya have shown. From an aerial standpoint, it has been proven time and time again that one or two armed enemy helicopters can wreak havoc on a unit without air defense capabilities, and the proliferation of worldwide Russian helicopter users alone is enough to nullify anyone's false sense of security regarding the capabilities of our future enemies.

I cannot legitimately critique CPT Nobles overall concept, but I feel I am qualified to say that he gives no acceptable justification for omitting air defense from the light cavalry regiment. In fact, I do not think such justification exists.

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Combat Accounts Requested

Dear Sir:

I have been commissioned by my publisher to write a book of combat stories from all wars in which American tanks fought. I'm asking that your readers harvest their memories — from all wars, 1917 to the present — and send the results to me at the address below.

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